

§ 65-66. Receipts from sale of personal property or services; trust account; penalties.

(a) It shall be deemed contrary to public policy if any person or legal entity receives, holds, controls or manages funds or proceeds received from the sale of, or from a contract to sell, personal property or services which may be used in a cemetery in connection with the burial of or the commemoration of the memory of a deceased human being, where payments for the same are made either outright or on an installment basis prior to the demise of the person or persons so purchasing them or for whom they are so purchased, unless the person or legal entity holds, controls or manages the funds, subject to the limitations and regulations prescribed in this section. This section shall apply to all cemetery companies or other legal entities that offer for sale or sell personal property or services which may be used in a cemetery in connection with the burial of, or the commemoration of the memory of, a deceased human being, but shall exclude persons holding a license under Article 13D of Chapter 90 of the General Statutes.

(b) Any cemetery company or other entity entering into a contract for the sale of personal property or services, to be used in a cemetery in connection with disposing of, or commemorating the memory of a deceased human being wherein the use of the personal property or the furnishing of services is not immediately requested or required, shall comply with the following requirements and conditions:

- (1) The cemetery company or other entity shall deposit an amount equal to sixty percent (60%) of all proceeds received on the contracts into a trust account, either in the form of an account governed by a trust agreement and handled by a corporate trustee or in the form of a passbook savings account, certificates of deposit for time certificates, or money-market certificates with a licensed and insured bank, credit union, or savings institution located in the State of North Carolina until the amount deposited equals sixty percent (60%) of the actual sale price of the property or services sold. The accounts or deposits or both shall be in the name of the cemetery company or other entity in a form which will permit withdrawals only with the participation and consent of the Cemetery Commission as required by subdivision (4) of this subsection.
- (2) All funds received on account of a contract for the sale of the personal property or services, whether the funds be received directly from the purchaser or from the sale or assignment of notes entered into by the purchase or otherwise, shall be deposited into the trust account as required by subdivision (1) of this subsection.
- (3) All deposits required herein shall be made into the trust account so established on or before the last day of the month following receipt of the funds by the cemetery company or other entity.
- (4) Withdrawals from a trust account may be made by the depositor, but only with the written approval of the Commission or officer or employee of the Commission authorized to act for the Commission. Withdrawals may be made only upon delivery of the merchandise or services for which the funds were deposited, cancellation of a contract, the presence of excess funds in the trust account, or under other circumstances deemed appropriate by the Commission. The Commission shall promulgate rules and regulations governing withdrawals from trust accounts, including time and frequency of withdrawals, payments that will be made with the withdrawals, notice to the Commission prior to withdrawals, the number and identity of persons other than the owner who are authorized by the owner to make withdrawals, the

officers and employees of the Commission authorized to approve withdrawals, and any other matters necessary to implement the provisions of this subdivision. Withdrawals will not be allowed if the amount remaining in the trust account would fall below sixty percent (60%) of all proceeds received on account of contracts for the sale of the personal property or services.

- (5) If for any reason a cemetery company or other entity who has entered into a contract for the sale of personal property or services cannot or does not provide the personal property or perform the services called for by the contract after request in writing to do so, the purchaser or his heirs or assigns or duly authorized representative shall be entitled to receive the entire amount paid on the contract and any income if any, earned thereon by the trust account.
- (6) Every year after September 1, 1975, the cemetery company, the trustee or other entity shall within 75 days after the end of the calendar year, file a financial report of the trust funds with the Commission, setting forth the principal thereof, the investments and payments made, the income earned and disbursed; provided, however, that the Commission may require the cemetery, trustee, or other entity to make the additional financial reports as it may deem advisable.

(c) Whenever a contract for the sale of personal property or services or both allocates payments to apply to one item at a time under a specific schedule, the contract shall be considered divisible. Title to each item of personal property or the right to each item of services shall pass to the purchaser upon full payment for that item regardless of the remaining balance on other items under the same contract.

(d) Any contract for the sale of personal property or services or both shall state separate costs for each item of personal property, for each act of installation required by the contract, for opening and closing each grave space, and for each other item of services included in the contract.

(e) All contracts for the sale of personal property or services or both must be printed in type size as required by the Truth in Lending Act, 15 U.S.C. § 1601 et seq., and regulations adopted pursuant to that act.

(f) In the event of prepayment, interest charged shall be no more than the interest earned on the unpaid balance computed on a percent per month basis for each month or part of a month up to the date of final payment. Any excess interest which has been paid by the purchaser must be refunded to him, his assigns, or his representative within 30 days after the final payment. No penalty or additional charge for prepayment may be required.

(g) In lieu of the deposits required under subsection (b) of this section, the cemetery company or other entity may post with the Commission a good and sufficient performance bond by surety company licensed to do business in North Carolina and in an amount sufficient to cover all payments made directly or indirectly by or on account of purchasers who have not received the purchased property and services. Money received from the sale or assignment of notes entered into by the purchasers, or otherwise, shall be treated as payments made by the purchasers.

(h) The Commission shall have the power and is required from time to time as it may deem necessary to examine the business of any cemetery company or other entity writing contracts for the sale of the property or services as herein contemplated. The written report of the examination shall be filed in the office of the Commission. Any person or entity being examined shall produce the records of the company needed for the examination.

(i) Any provision of any contract for the sale of the personal property or the performance of services herein contemplated under which the purchaser or beneficiary waives any of the provisions of this section shall be void.

(j) Repealed by Session Laws 1991, c. 653, s. 7.

(k) Nothing in this section shall apply to persons or legal entities holding licenses under Article 13D of Chapter 90 of the General Statutes when engaging in activities for which a license is required under that Article.

(l) If any report is not received within the time stipulated by the Commission or herein, the Commission may levy and collect a late filing fee of twenty-five dollars (\$25.00) per month for each month of delinquency.

(m) Within 30 days following the execution of a contract for the sale of personal property or performance of services, a purchaser may cancel his contract by giving written notice to the seller. The seller may cancel the contract, upon default by purchaser, by giving written notice to the purchaser. Within 30 days of notice of cancellation, the cemetery company or other entity shall refund to purchaser the principal amount on deposit in the trust account for his benefit on any undelivered merchandise or services. This amount (no other obligations owed the purchaser by the seller) shall constitute the purchaser's entire entitlements under the contract. The seller may not terminate the contract without complying with this subsection.

(n) A cemetery company shall not require the purchaser or consumer of a grave space, mausoleum, or mausoleum section to purchase a vault from the cemetery company or from any other particular seller of vaults as a condition to the purchase or use of a grave space, mausoleum, or mausoleum section but may require that a casket be enclosed within a vault. A cemetery company may charge a reasonable fee not to exceed twenty dollars (\$20.00) for delivery of vaults or inspection of vaults that are purchased from a person other than the cemetery company. (1975, c. 768, s. 1; 1979, c. 888, s. 7; 1987, c. 488, s. 7; 1991, c. 653, s. 7; 1995, c. 509, s. 135.1(j), (k); 2004-202, s. 9; 2010-102, s. 4.)